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Legislative District 12B  
Howard County

*Committees*

Environmental Matters

*Chair:* Subcommittee on Land Use and Ethics

Rules and Executive Nominations

Joint Committee on Program

Open Space/Agricultural Land Preservation



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To: Members of the Columbia Downtown Redevelopment Focus Group

From: Delegate Liz Bobo

I will be absent from the Focus Group meeting tomorrow because Lloyd and I are taking a post-legislative session vacation in northern Spain.

The subject of today's meeting, zoning, is perhaps the most important to date. For that reason, I wanted to send you some of my most basic thoughts on the issue.

In short, we could achieve a quality downtown that provides for a significant number of additional residential units, open spaces, cultural and recreational amenities, and considerably more retail and office space within the framework of our existing New Town zoning category.

I believe that the introduction of a "zoning overlay", New Urbanism and the accompanying form-based zoning to the downtown area is neither desirable nor necessary. Those concepts may well be appropriate to package a large new project or the redevelopment of a much older community, but we must remember that our existing New Town zoning category already contains many of those principles. New Town, a very forward-thinking zoning concept that has served us well for 40 years, can easily be modified to accommodate whatever changes have to be introduced to achieve the original goals of the charrette.

Although I may not support all of the development proposals presented by the planning staff, virtually all of them could be accommodated under a modified New Town zoning category. A new Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) could be introduced to increase the number of dwelling units allowed. The allowable acreage allocated to the several basic residential sub-categories could be adjusted. Height limits could be introduced. Setback and other restrictions could easily be added to existing regulations. The Corporate Boulevard concept could be approved today, with no appreciable changes necessary.

I believe it would be very unwise to introduce a further complication to the many issues already under consideration. The citizens have generally understood and accepted the process of New Town development. The planning staff and other county officials are well versed in working with these regulations, and the development community seems to be very satisfied with existing processes. Let's not introduce more confusion and possible doubt about a positive outcome by shifting to an unknown commodity.

I look forward to discussing these zoning matters with you in the future.

On another matter, as I have stated at previous focus group meetings, I strongly support the creation of an architectural review board, and I believe it should have some citizens on it who are not architects as well.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liz Bobo".  
Liz Bobo